been launched under the title "Atithi Devo Bhavah" for preservation and protection of heritage monuments and tourist sites in the country.

Shortage of hotel accommodation for tourists

236. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a surge of business tourists from overseas in India;

(b) if so, the details of various categories of tourists, including for medical treatment, visiting India during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that currently there are not adequate hotel rooms of star category to cater to such tourists;

(d) if so, the details thereof and action propose to be taken by Government to bridge the gap;

(e) whether private players will be encouraged to build star category hotels to fill the shortage of hotel accommodations; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The estimated number of foreign tourists who visited India during 2003, 2004 & 2005 are as under:—

(Figures in Lakh)

	2003	2004	2005
Business	1.63	0.79	1.10
Conference	0.11	0.07	0.08
Education & Employment	0.14	0.14	0.16
Tourism & Others	25.38	33.57	37.85
' Total:	27.26	34.57	39.19

Information on the number of tourists visiting India for medical treatment is not available.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Tourism industry is facing a shortage of hotel rooms, especially in the main tourist destinations as well as the metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore. The shortage is very acute during the peak tourist season from October to March every year. The tremendous increase in foreign and domestic tourists is the principal reasons for the shortage. The Ministry of Tourism has written to all State Governments and Land Owning Agencies like Railways, Ministry of Civil Aviation etc. to identify land banks for hotels and offer these hotel sites on joint revenue sharing basis etc. and to increase FAR/FSI of existing hotels.

(e) and (f) Construction of hotels is primarily a private sector activity and the Ministry of Tourism extends all facilitation by way of granting approval at the project and planning stage, allowing foreign direct investment upto 100% and also allowing foreign technical collaboration. Ministry of Tourism also has a scheme "Incentive to Accommodation Infrastructure" under which subsidy of 10% of the principal loan is given to the hotel of budget and low-budget categories, subject to a maximum assistance of Rs. 25 lakh for one star hotels: Rs. 50 lakh for 2 star hotels and Rs. 75 lakh for 3 star hotels.

Tax holiday scheme for investment in budget hotels

237. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are thinking of announcing a tax holiday scheme for investments in budget hotels, Cruise holidays and promotion of rural destinations, etc:

(b) if so, whether the existing places of historical importance in Maharashtra, Vidharba regions are getting due place in Government publicity/campaigns in India and abroad to attract maximum number of budget tourists to such places and new places being thoughts of; and

(c) whether adequate infrastructure like budget hotels, reliable public transport and air connectivity, etc., be ensured, along with security precautions?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Ministry of Tourism has requested the Ministry of Finance to extend Tax Holiday for investment in budget hotels all over the country.